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LATIN IS DEAD, LONG LIVE LATIN.

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THERE MUST BE A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS IN THE REASONS OFFERED FOR STUDYING LATIN. INSTEAD OF STRESSING IMPROVED ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY AND PREPARATION FOR CERTAIN PROFESSIONS AS THE BENEFITS OF LATIN STUDY, WE SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON THE UNIQUE QUALITY OF LATIN, THAT IT IS A DEAD LANGUAGE, AND MOVE STUDENTS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE INTO THE STUDY OF ROMAN LITERATURE. STUDYING LATIN IS A VALUABLE WAY OF LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST, A NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE EVEN IN THE MOST MODERN FIELDS, AND OF GAINING AN INSIGHT INTO OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE. PERHAPS THE GREATEST FACTOR IN DECLINING LATIN ENROLLMENTS IS THAT TEACHERS AND TEXTBOOKS HAVE TRIED TO MAKE LATIN A LIVING LANGUAGE, A SPOKEN LANGUAGE, AND HAVE ATTEMPTED, UNWISELY, TO IMPOSE AUDIOLINGUAL METHODS. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE DFL BULLETIN," VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1, OCTOBER 1967, PAGES 9-11. (AS)

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Latin is Dead— Long Live Latin!

by Harry Reinert
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All the languages offered in the usual high school are competing for essentially the same rather small group of the more able students. Latin can most successfully compete with the modern languages by emphasizing those characteristics which belong uniquely to Latin. Because the linguistic structure of Latin is stable, i.e. because Latin is a dead langauge, it is possible to move into Latin literature much earlier than is possible in the modern languages.

This argument presupposes that the major reason for studying Latin is to read Latin literature. If we are to emphasize the unique nature of Latin, the only defensible reason for studying Latin would seem to be that this is the language used by the Romans and by educated writers in all fields until two centuries ago. We should emphasize that not only did Caesar and Cicero write in Latin, not only did St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas write in Latin, but also such diverse persons as the French mathematician-philosopher Rene Descartes, the Dutch Jewish philosopher Spinoza, and the English scientists Harvey and Newton all wrote their major works in Latin.

We need to understand more about the Romans, for although we would do well to imitate the ideals of the Greeks, our culture appears to be much more akin to that of the Romans. They, too, were materialistic, cosmopolitan, pragmatic, and a little cynical. If the Roman culture carried the seeds of its own destruction within itself, as it certainly must have, perhaps by understanding the Romans we can come to identify these same weaknesses within our culture and avoid the fate of the Roman Empire. Since a language reflects the culture in which it is used, the only way to understand the Roman is to understand his language in its own terms.

Such understanding at an elementary level is possible for high school students within two or three years of study. (We need to limit ourselves to two or three years, because this is still the most usual length of time spent in foreign language study in high school.) In Edmonds High School the basic grammatical concepts are handled in the first year course. The second year is devoted almost entirely to shorter selections from a representative sampling of Roman authors. Only a little more than one month is spent on Caesar. The students read selections from Cicero's first and fourth orations against Catiline, along with Sallust's account of the speech by Caesar opposing the death penalty for the conspirators. The latter half of the year is devoted to poetry, including selections from Virgil, Ovid, Catullus, Horace, Martial and Juvenal.

By the end of the second year it is already possible for the students to pull together suggestions found in these readings in order to get some insight into the Roman character. Caesar's arguments (as reported by Sallust) against capital punishment are certainly relevant to the same controversy today. His statement that the Roman forebears preferred to imitate rather than envy whatever they saw that was good or serviceable in other cultures helps explain the potpourri character of much Roman architecture, religion and customs. Virgil's righteous Aeneas ("sum pius Aeneas"), who turned his back on the love of the Carthaginian queen in order to follow the dictates of the gods, and Horace's picture of Regulus advising the Senate against ransoming prisoners and then sacrificing himself for the welfare of Rome give a clear account of the Roman reverence (which they occasionally practiced) for *pietas* and *virtus*. Catullus' humorous, biting description of Arrius (Catullus 84), the self-made man who thought he spoke marvelously well when he added "h's" to his words — probably in imitation of Greek — and Juvenal's complaints a century and a half later about the "Greeklings" who were found in every wealthy household and his cry, "I cannot abide a Greek Rome" ("Non possum ferre, Quirites,/Graecam urbem," *Sat.* III, 60-61) clearly show the degree to which the Greeks had insinuated themselves into Roman culture, perhaps because the Romans preferred to imitate rather than to envy.

On the other hand some of the lighter verses of Ovid, Horace, Catullus and Martial show the Romans as living persons who enjoyed many of the same pleasures and suffered the same frustrations as other peoples: here we find a fleeting lovers' quarrel, an invitation to dinner — if the guest will bring his meal with him, and Laecania who has such white teeth because they were "store-bought" (*emptos*). After a class has worked through Horace's account of the Siren Pyrrha, who leads so many suitors to shipwreck (*Carm.* I.v), and then reads several different translations (including one by Milton), the students can clearly see that poetry truly depends on the language in which it is written. However halting the translation process may be for students at this stage, the subtlety of Horace's imagery in this poem, like the subtlety and flexibility of Virgil's rhythms, gives the student insights into a world he never before knew existed.

Such insights, derived from reading the Latin works of the Roman authors themselves, are realizable goals for second year high school students. On such a basis a third year program can be built which is equally significant, either by expanding further the readings begun in the second year or by branching out into other areas in which Latin has played an important role, e.g. medieval Latin.

A program which offers such variety and makes possible such understanding certainly should be attractive to those more able students for which each language is bidding. If Latin enrollment in public and private schools has

LATIN (Cont.)

dropped sharply over the past years, as it certainly has, the cause must be that Latin has been promoted for the wrong reasons. For several generations student enrollment has been artificially stimulated by illusory promises and unrealistic goals. Living in a pragmatically oriented society, we always feel compelled to justify any study in terms of its practical results. Thus, the traditional arguments revolved around two classes of benefits the student would receive: intellectual improvement and satisfaction of professional requirements. On the one hand the student was told that the study of Latin would improve his knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and that he would learn to think more logically. On the other hand Latin was assumed to be an essential requirement for anyone going into medicine, law, the ministry, or certain other professions. Within the past few years the fallacious nature of such claims has become increasingly apparent. Or at least, the degree to which such claims are true, they are equally true of any foreign language, and they are not a portion of the unique character of Latin.

Failing to see that one of the unique qualities of Latin is that it is a dead language, many Latin teachers in their zeal to make Latin "live" for their students devoted too much class time to what were essentially kindergarten activities, so that not enough time was left to learn the language itself. The more mature students — the very students who should be taking Latin — were not intrigued by such antics and they avoided Latin. Textbook publishers have also been involved in this trend. The most widely-used texts have been successively simplified over the past thirty years so that it now takes two years to accomplish what can be done in one. This simplification consisted primarily of breaking the grammar down into ever smaller portions. The final result is that the student is left without any concept of the more general relationship between these innumerable grammatical particles. Such texts can scarely be expected to attract the bright and able student.

Latin today is in somewhat the same predicament as Humpty Dumpty: all the textbooks claiming "Latin Lives Today," all the lists of Latin derivatives in English will not establish Latin as a living language. These textbook writers and teachers who try to treat Latin the same as a modern language are ignoring this one fundamental, obvious fact: Latin is a dead language. Latin is not only dead now, but it has been dead for centuries. No amount of protestation to the contrary will make Latin again a language which is used for everyday communication between members of a community. The pretense that Latin is just another modern language is as misguided as the traditional arguments for studying Latin. As we saw earlier, the stability of Latin is one of its greatest assets, and we should capitalize on this aspect, not minimize it.

Yet, there are numbers of teachers and publishers who apparently feel that Humpty Dumpty can be put back together with the help of the audio-lingual method. First of all came sets of tapes to accompany already published texts. Now a few truly new programs are being used experimentally in some schools. The supposition seems to be that if we act as if Latin is a living language — a modern, spoken language — Latin will somehow gain new life. Such an emphasis on audio-lingual techniques not only does not highlight the unique character of Latin, but it may well establish a new set of illusory goals, i.e. those goals sought in modern languages.

This attempt to treat Latin as modern language fails to emphasize the unique character and value of Latin just as surely as did the earlier lists of "practical" benefits. Even a cursory glance at Latin in comparison with any contemporary language shows glaring differences. The most obvious difference is that Latin is not now spoken by any group of people as a native tongue. Thus, any effort to treat Latin as a spoken language must forever have a false sound to it. For where does one go to find native speakers to make tapes, as is the practice with German or French or Spanish or Russian? To be sure, the audio-lingual emphasis on speaking is not only because these are spoken languages: the student is expected to have greater fluency in the language if he has first learned to speak it. But it has not been conclusively shown that whatever benefits the student receives from instruction in he spoken language are justified in terms of the amount of time that must be devoted to this skill. The incessant repetition of pattern drills and other language lab exercises is very time consuming. When this aspect of language learning is omitted, the student can begin to delve into Latin literature in his second year of high school instead of waiting until a fourth or fifth year.

If Latin tries to compete for students on the same terms as the modern languages, it scarcely seems possible that its appeal will be very widespread. Why should a student learn to speak Latin, when he could learn to speak German, French, or Russian? He might just as well learn to speak classical Greek, Sanskrit, or Anglo-Saxon. But if Latin is promoted for those features which set it apart from the other languages in the program, it might very well be able to compete successfully. Some very able students either do not want to speak a foreign language or have difficulty in mastering new sound systems. (In my German classes I have found that a surprising number of the most gifted students are very poor mimics of German pronunciation.) To such students a language which they are required only to understand and to read would be most welcome.

Although the principal emphasis in Latin is on the past, there is another facet of this study which also could be emphasized. Aided by new scientific research equipment, classicists during the next fifty years may very well have the most fruitful and exciting period in history. There is even a likelihood that the classicist in his explorations of the past will provide much of the popular adventure of the future. The first signs of this possibility are already present. Within the past year or so commercial television networks have shown programs dealing with an attempt to retrace the route taken by Odysseus on his return to Ithaca, or the possible use in 1600 B.C. of Stonehenge as an astronomical observatory, and the search by Dr. Leakey in Africa for the origins of man. In the fall of 1966 the *Saturday Evening Post* carried a long feature article about Dr. Leakey's work. The *Saturday Review* in November 1966 published a report of two men who, using Plato's description as a basis, believe they may have found the legendary lost continent (or island) of Atlantis. According to this account the same volcanic eruption which caused Atlantis to sink was also responsible for the destruction of the Minoan civilization at Knossos (linking this with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur) and for the "parting" of the Red Sea when the Israelites were fleeing Egypt. *Time* magazine has reported a project is under way to bombard the pyramids with radioactive particles to seek previously undiscovered burial chambers.

Each of these accounts on television and in the popular magazines involves the increasing use of scientific instruments along with an understanding of the main outlines of past history. Both the bombardment of the pyramids and the investigation of Stonehenge involve

the use of computers. The search for Atlantis has so far been conducted with sonar and eventually will require the use of a research submarine.

Such investigations can lead to interesting speculation, as in Mary Renault's novels, *The King Must Die* and *The Bull from the Sea*, both of which appeared in paperbound editions. In these novels the author illustrates the possibility of interpreting many classical allusions in credible terms. The work of von Schliemann, exemplified in his refusal to accept Troy as a purely mythical concept, is not yet finished. It now begins to appear that there may indeed be no legendary figure or event that does not have a historical basis.

Along with moon landings and interplanetary travel, it may be that adventure in the future will also be found in exploring the past. There are also new areas of specialization opening for the adventuresome spirit: for example, marine archaeology requires trained archaeologists who use scuba gear to dive to the ocean's bottom. If a young person today wants to participate in this new adventure, he must be acquainted with the old. Latin is an excellent way to begin this acquaintance.

By emphasizing the unique character of Latin, by avoiding the Scylla of practical benefits and the Charybdis of audio-lingualism, by promoting Latin solely on the basis of its intrinsic value we can offer students a key to a rich and exciting past and perhaps to a challenging and fascinating future.

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Developments in Modern Language Teaching—A Summary and Forecast

by Vincenza Ciofari
Boston University

To say the teaching of modern language has undergone changes is indeed a platitude. To elaborate these changes before a group of teachers has come to be routine. Yet everyone involved in the teaching of modern languages must evolve for himself a basis of operation under the bombardment of new ideas. Routine was a comfortable mistress, but routine has been undermined and teachers are spending many sleepless hours. Let us review briefly the causes.

Traditional language teaching had evolved a routine readily transmitted from one generation to the next. Of course, even traditional teaching was revolutionary in its day, but that revolution antedates our present teachers. It was quite a revolution to establish modern languages on a par with the classics, whose cultural values had gone unchanged. It was quite a revolution to study the speech of ordinary people against the literature of the masters. But long before our day that revolution had already taken place.

Modeled on the pattern of the classics, a living language was taught from standard speech whose rules were derived from the writings of recognized masters. The fact that this standard might turn out to be a contrived language did not disturb the teacher. If the living language did not follow set rules, it could not be good language. The fact that recognized writers differed in their usage did not prevent the formulation of rules. The object of modern language teaching became the creation of a series of standards each of which was inviolate. The ultimate judge of correct speech was the teacher with his book of rules, not the living language.

In this traditional type of instruction the model is the foundation of the methodology. The model is repeated orally to learn pronunciation. All the vocabulary entries of the model are extracted and memorized. The structure of the language is derived from examples given in the model, and if the examples are not sufficient, the model is padded accordingly. The student is directed to create countless little models each of which illustrates one particular point of grammar. After this long and tedious process, he is ready to turn sentences word for word from his native into the target language. The student eventually acquires the ability to piece together a new language like a jigsaw puzzle, and sometimes just as slowly.

Various types of instruction are grouped under this comprehensive term "traditional," but in actuality the difference between the types is quite marked. In this paper we shall try to describe objectively each methodology, analyzing its strong and weak points, in order to catch a glimpse of the direction of modern language teaching of the future.

The "traditional" method of language instruction is commonly equated with the grammar-translation method. Actually it is a composite of grammar-translation, direct method, reading method, philological approach, phonetic approach, and even conversational approach. In common parlance, the traditional is the method which rejects the influx of new ideas and which opponents attack as the source of all evils.

In the *grammar-translation* method language is assumed to be a standard speech derived from the usage of recognized authors. The rules for the language are deduced from observation of usage in the models. The grammarian who prepares this type of text has accumulated rules from previous observers and has tested them for inconsistencies. The rules have actually become a standard in themselves. The weakness in this method is that rules come to dictate usage instead of usage dictating rules. In this type of instruction the model is all important. Vocabulary is extracted and memorized, pronunciation is learned by imitation, and conversation is limited to questions and answers based on spoon-fed information. The student learns to construct the new language bit by bit — by single words, then by phrases, then by sentences — but always with word-to-word translation into his native language. The process of piecing together sentences is slow and discouraging, because living language moves with the flow of ideas. Moreover, the student frequently stops his study at the point where he has just accumulated rules and never reaches the point where he expresses ideas in the new language.

In the *direct method* the basic assumption is that the student can make better progress by dealing with only one